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Rare treasures of days past

*Based in Wolferton on the Sandringham Estate, Norfolk auction house **Holts Auctioneers** tells the tales of some extraordinary items that passed under the hammer at their highly successful summer auction*

The internationally recognised Holts Auctioneers sold over 82% of the 856 lots entered into their summer auction, an impressive proportion in auction terms, with a total hammer of just under £1.4m.

"In our small field the market is strong," explains Founder Nicholas Holt. "The demand will always be greater than the supply because, of course, we are dealing in antiquities that can't be reproduced. We are leaders in the field because we specialise in this exclusive commodity."

One item of interest that did particularly well at auction was a remarkable Westley Richards vintage air pistol, which flew past its estimate of £800-1200 to sell for £2600. There is much speculation around these extremely rare air-pistols and it is believed just 30 examples exist in collections worldwide.

"It was heartening to see the top five lots of the auction were all best English guns and rifles by the likes of

David McKay Brown, Holland & Holland and J. Purdey & Sons," says Nicholas. The most expensive lot was a fine pair of 12-bore round-action ejectors by David McKay Brown, selling for an impressive £50,000 on the hammer.

Also featuring at the auction was the world's smallest ever semi-auto pistol, which exceeded the estimate of £1200-1600 to sell for £1900. The diminutive Kolibri pistol is a world record holder twice over as it also takes the world's smallest centre-fire round of ammunition. The brainchild of Austrian watchmaker Franz Pfannl, with financial help from Georg Grabner, it used flash powder as a propellant to increase apparent effectiveness. However it was only produced in very small numbers and was not a commercial success.

A number of vintage gun and ammunition related advertising signs and memorabilia also made their

usual impact at auction, with most selling top or above estimate. "These are interesting because they provide a colourful insight into days past,"

Nicholas says. "There are not many companies that would invest in ashtrays or pocket watches in the present day to advertise their wares."

Holts Auctioneers offer a free valuation service and are always on the look-out for fine modern and antique weapons, as well as associated items. They are currently gathering consignments for their November auction, so why not make an appointment to see if you have the next treasure to be uncovered...



NEXT AUCTIONS

27th November - Antique & vintage guns & accessories, taxidermy, edged weapons & militaria

28th November - Modern sporting guns and accessories

HOLTS
FINE MODERN & ANTIQUE GUNS

Church Farm Barns, Wolferton, Norfolk PE31 6HA

T: 01485 542822 E: info@holtsauctioneers.com W: www.holtsauctioneers.com

